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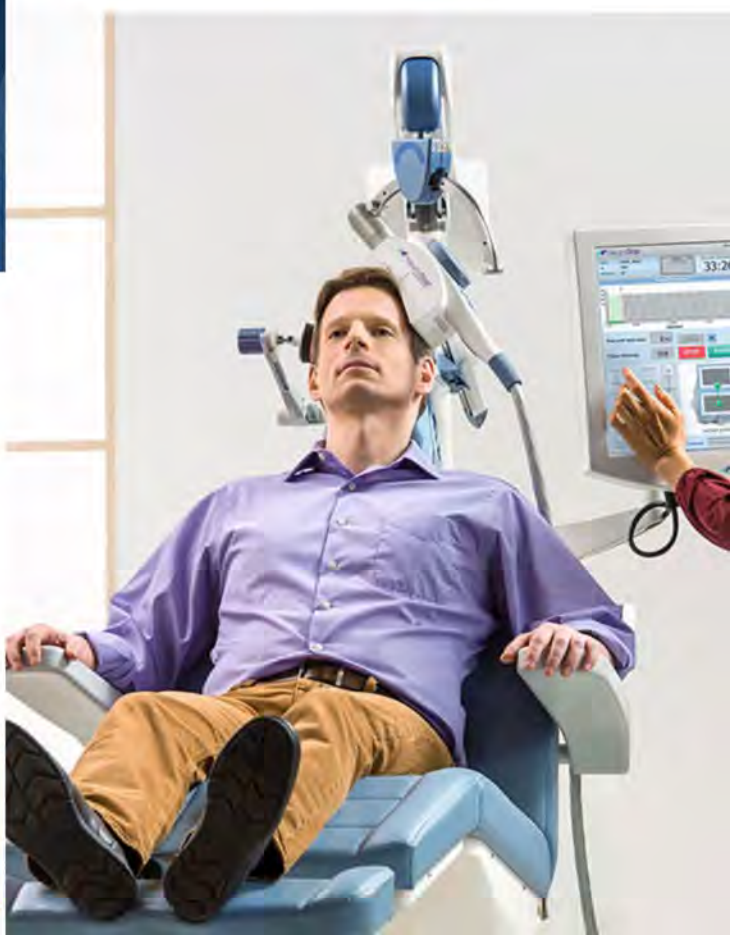

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GRAB KATHY

For the love of Kathy: An interview with Kathy Griffin

By Gregg Shapiro

Photo By Jen Rosenstein

I've had the pleasure of interviewing comedy legend Kathy Griffin a few times over the years, but I think our December 2024 interview might be my favorite. Griffin, the very definition of a survivor (much like her dear friend and mentor Joan Rivers), is in the midst of one of the most impressive returns in the history of modern comedy. Her admirably indomitable spirit has allowed her to survive multiple losses (including her beloved mother Maggie), a second divorce, a lung cancer bout (including the loss of her voice), and becoming public enemy number one (to some) due to an anti-Trump stunt that resulted in her being blacklisted for years. Nevertheless, she persisted, and we're so glad she did. Why, you might ask, is this my favorite Kathy Griffin interview? Because it started like this.

Kathy Griffin: Congratulations on the interview of a lifetime.
Gregg Shapiro: I guess this might be my third or fourth interview of a lifetime, because we've spoken before.

Kathy Griffin: Gregg, we have what's called a relationship. I want this interview to be cheerful and sell a lot of tickets.

GS: **I will do my best! Kathy, the title of your new comedy tour is "Kathy Griffin: My Life on the PTSD-List."**
KG: I, of course, did it as a nod to the fact that Peacock has finally decided to air all six seasons of the double Emmy Award-winning "Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D List" so that people who are too young to remember that show can just think I'm crazy, so they go based on the title which is completely true. I do have to say, even though I don't get an additional penny, I do love that Peacock is airing "My Life on the D List," again, and I love that people are rediscovering my mom and dad and can fall in love with them all over again.

GS: You're reaching a whole new audience! As you mentioned, you have been diagnosed with complex PTSD. How does comedy function as a healing tool for you?
KG: I talk about everything in the show: from why I have PTSD to the ridiculous treatments I'm doing for PTSD. As an example, one of my therapists has me get on all fours and arch my back like a kitty cat and say "meow." Then I tip my head up and I say "moo," like I'm a cow. I'm a fucking star, Gregg! I'm sitting there going "meow moo meow moo…"

GS: Did they explain what that does?
KG: It's supposed to get you out of your head and get you into your body. Gregg, between you and me, it's a lot of bullshit. I had to stop doing something recently. I don't know if you saw the documentary about kundalini yoga ("Breath of Fire"). I was doing kundalini yoga to help my PTSD and, get this, the

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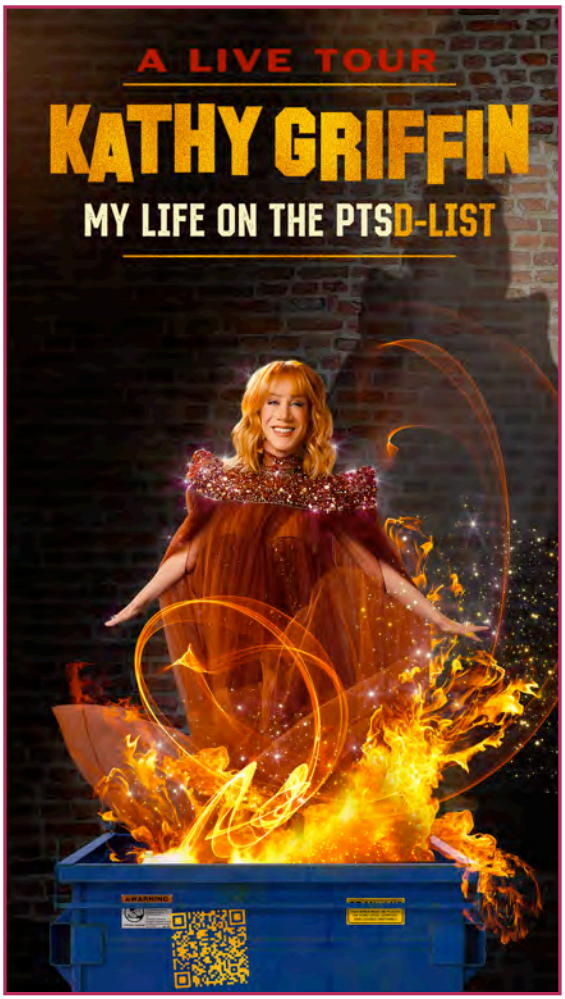
whole thing is bullshit, Gregg. There was never a guy named Kundalini. His real name was like Smith or something. So, I've been doing kundalini yoga for a year. It involves chanting things that this dude, who's a grifter, made up. I think that's funny, I'm sorry. I talk about all this stuff. I go down the laundry list. I talk about how the fallout from the Trump photo affected me. Being ditched by 75 percent of my friends who never came back. Being on the no-fly list. Being out of work by my own beloved industry for seven years. All that messed with my head.

GS: You've also talked about your dogs, including the one named after your late mother Maggie. My husband and I have a Yorkipoo named Coco, who is the center of our world. What can you tell the readers about the healing impact dogs have had in your life?
KG: Gregg, I can't believe you asked that! I'm in a hotel in Atlanta where I have a show tonight. Maggie is sitting on my lap. I have four dogs, and I brought a second one (to Atlanta) and his name is Elliot. I bring at least one of my four dogs on every single leg of the tour. The dog I named Maggie, after my mom of course, is a little redhead and she's trouble just like the original Maggie. She's a little Dickens. She's the smallest one and, God damn it, she's the pack leader. I don't know how I fucked this up. I have big dogs, and she barks at them. Don't be surprised if I bring all four to Chicago or other places. I'm not going to meet those gays without a safety dog!

GS: I'm glad you mentioned the gays. You've spoken about being abandoned by friends and fans following the Trump troubles. Would it be fair to say that your LGBTQ fans stuck with you throughout?
KG: From day one! I had gay people sending me pictures of themselves dressed as me with a Trump bloody Halloween mask, which obviously just means ketchup. There was a parade on Fire Island. You people will do a fucking parade for anything. There was a God damn dress-like-Kathy-Griffin-and-get-a-Trump-Halloween-mask-and-make-it-bloody-parade, and that's why I'm once an ally, always an ally.

GS: This interview is taking place a little more than a month after your record-breaking sixth Carnegie Hall show in October 2024. What was that experience like for you?
KG: Gregg, you're going to make me cry. It was out of body! It was so magical. Do you know that I literally got on my hands and knees -- I did not meow -- I kissed the stage. There is Kathy Griffin lipstick on the Carnegie Hall stage. I felt my dear departed friend Joan Rivers in my body. We held the record together. She had done it five times and I've done it five. She would say, "You bitch! You better not do it again, you bitch. I knew I could never trust you, you bitch." We would laugh. I was backstage where Tchaikovsky had been, where the great conductors had been, where Kathleen Battle and Beverly Sills sang opera. I felt my dear departed Joan in my body saying, "You can do this. You've got it. Have fun." She'd always say, "How lucky are we?" On our last dinner together, we gossiped and talked shit about everybody, but then she would always go, "How lucky are we?" I just kept going, "I get to play Carnegie by myself. No opening act. I write every single word of my stand-up, not like Ellen." Holy shit, did you see that shit show? You can see her eyes reading a teleprompter. But I digress. Anyway, I was so happy and grateful to be there. I can still see the audience. It was a full house. Look, every show is a gift. Honestly, every show I hear Joan saying, "How lucky are we?"



GS: Your current tour began before the horrifying 2024 election and will continue well into 2025.
KG: Gregg, we were doing so well! We were getting along so well!

GS: I apologize, but I just wanted to ask how much you will be addressing the subject, if at all?
KG: OK, get ready. I don't mention Trump one bit in this new show. It's not that I'm afraid of them. I certainly, as the kids say, fucked around and found out, and I'm proud of it. I did a whole tour about that experience called "The Laugh Your Head Off" tour. I made a movie about it called "Kathy Griffin: A Hell of a Story." It's on Amazon for free. I got awards. I did film festivals with it. It really covers all that part of what I went through which, love me or hate me, it was historic. To this day, no comedian in history has been investigated by the Department of Justice and the Attorney General.

GS: Not even Lenny Bruce?
KG: That was local. Local PD. In fact, I had a conversation about Lenny Bruce and George Carlin with the great Jane Fonda. Jane said, "Even I

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wasn't hassled by the Feds," and Jane was arrested. She said, "We've all had local PD but never the Feds." All I do is acknowledge it when I do my laundry list of why I have PTSD which includes the fallout from the Trump picture, pill addiction, being on a 5150 psych hold for three days, getting sober, finding out a year later I had lung cancer even though I never smoked, getting half my left lung removed and having my left front vocal cord permanently killed by the surgeon, and getting divorced, which I'm still trying to recover from. I kind of make fun of heartbreak, because we've all been through it. I also have had an implant put in my left vocal cord, so I got my voice back. It's funny, I'm a little hoarse now because I did a show last night, but I have my voice back, and I feel like I got my life back overnight.

GS: Is Reba McEntire aware that people confuse you for her, and if so, do you know if people confuse her for you?
KG: Gregg, let me tell you something. I love Reba! I live in fear of running into her and her just slapping me in the face. I'll tell you what, I deserve it. I cannot tell you how excited I am when people think I'm Reba. I used to get insulted and be like, "Excuse me, I'm award-winning comedy legend Kathy Griffin. How dare you?" Now, I just go, "Hi y'all!" And then I write, "Blessings," and I sign the autograph Reba McEntire.

GS: You have talked about your availability to be on the TV show "The Golden Bachelorette." Could you ever see yourself starring in your own sitcom?
KG: Yes! I already was the sidekick. I've had a reality show. I had my own show on MTV. I co-hosted New Year's for 10 years. I have guested on "Seinfeld" twice. Of course, I'm ready for a sitcom. My life is insane and should be documented.

GS: You've also mentioned that you'd like to be considered for a dramatic role. Do you have a favorite serious novel that you think would make a good movie with you in the lead?
KG: A Bible. I mean, not that I have a Messiah complex. But I see myself playing God. Kind of a female Reba lookalike with maybe too many dogs. The kind of god that gets in so much trouble that I'm such a god that I have to get myself out of trouble. I mean it writes itself, Gregg.

GS: We're speaking shortly before Christmas, and I was wondering how you observe the winter holidays.
KG: This is embarrassing, but I'm just going to tell you. Now that I'm 64, sexy, and single, I will pick up the phone and just cold call my friends and say, "What time is dinner?" Because I've hosted so many parties over the years, God dammit, now that I'm single it's payback time. You know Jesse Tyler Ferguson from "Modern Family?"

GS: Of course!
KG: I went over there last Christmas Eve, and I wasn't even fucking invited! Perhaps you've heard the name Lance Bass from NSync? Lance can run, but he can't hide. Lance can try to change his address. I will find him. I will show up. I'll bring cookies or something. But I am not only a hostess; I am what's called an "inviter." I will just invite myself. Gregg. I might come to your house if I feel like it.

GS: We have a guest room. You're more than welcome any time.
KG: What time?

GS: Pick a time.
KG: I'm going to come at four, so we can gossip for an hour before the other people arrive.

GS: That sounds great! Biopics continue to be popular with new ones about Bob Dylan and Robbie Williams currently receiving a lot of buzz. If there was a Kathy Griffin biopic, who would you want to play you?
KG: The bad thing is Kathy Lee Gifford would turn it down, which would be a big mistake. I'm going to have to go with Timothee Chalamet.

GS: If he can play Bob Dylan, he can certainly play you as well.
KG: And he can fit into all my clothes!

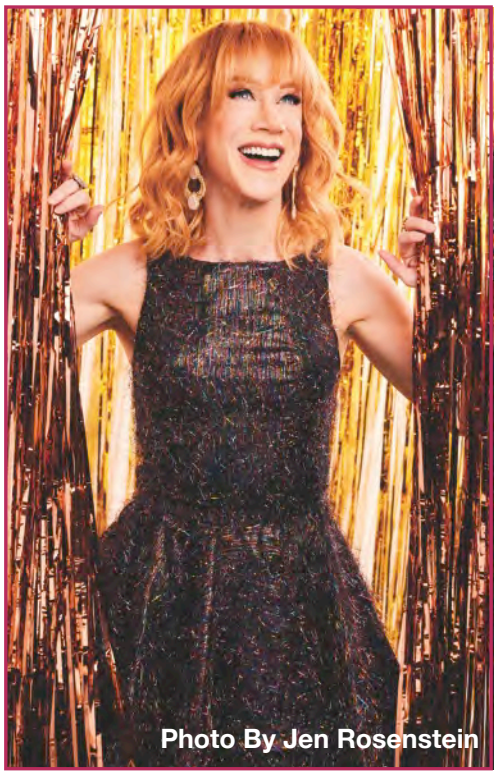
Photo By Jen Rosenstein

GS: Finally, you're performing at the Chicago Theatre, on New Year's Eve no less. What's the best part about performing for the hometown crowd?
KG: First of all, I'm so grateful to have my first gig since I got shit-canned from CNN seven years ago. On New Year's Eve, I'm so grateful to do what I do. For comedians, it's our busiest night. I'm really glad the show's at 8:00. I'll be honest, the 10:00 shows are rough. People are usually already really drunk, and you have to do the fucking countdown. Then everybody has a different countdown time. I'm yelling seven and they're yelling nine. It's a whole thing. I'm thrilled just to be working. I want to make people laugh. Then of course they can go get drunk after the show because it's a misconception that drunk people are good audiences. You want them to have had one drink. I'll bounce you. I have no shame. I'll have my security people… I don't care if you're in a fucking Rascal. I'll fucking come and pull you right out of your scooter. I don't care if you have an oxygen tank. You're getting the fuck out if you disrupt my show!

For show and ticket information, visit ***www.KathyGriffin.net.***

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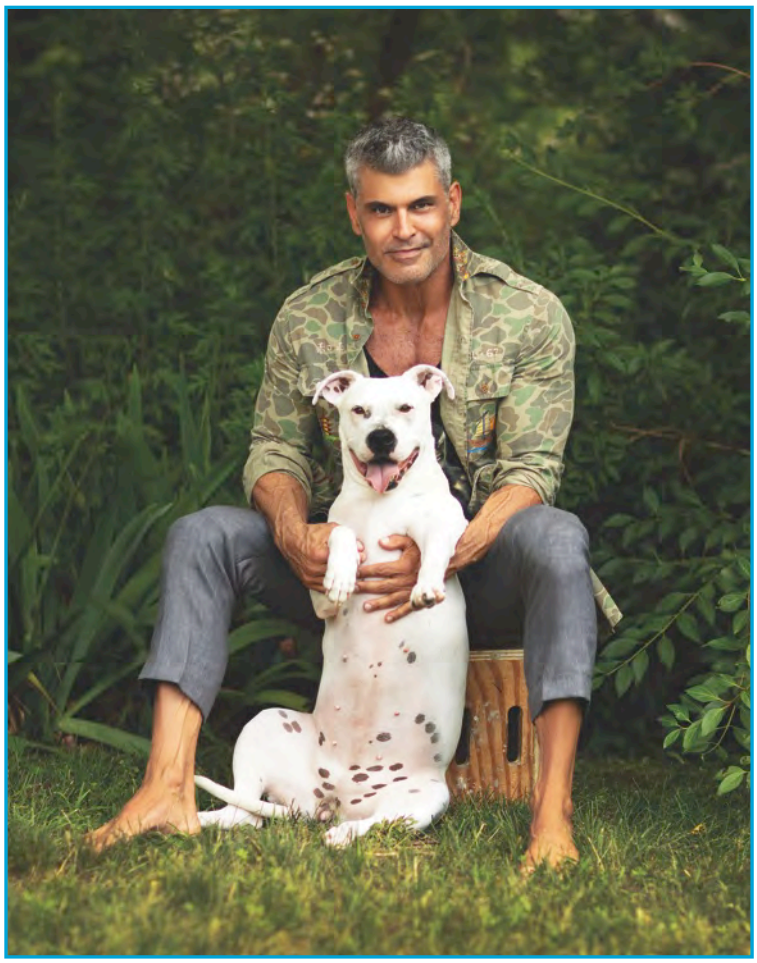
Flex for a Good Cause

Mike Ruiz Unleashes His 2025 Mutts and Muscles Calendar

By Tim Blankenship



Once again, Mike Ruiz is combining his love for human and animal beauty with a calendar that's as compassionate as it is captivating. Mutts and Muscles features an array of top fitness icons alongside 14 irresistibly adorable rescue dogs, presenting images that are both heartwarming and inspiring. Gracing the cover of this year's calendar is fitness legend Sergi Constance, known for his chiseled physique, social media influence, and his role as Zeus in Zack Snyder's Justice League films.

Ruiz's vision extends beyond the art of photography. Mutts and Muscles is a philanthropic project that supports animal rescues. With a staggering number of dogs being abandoned in 2024, the need has never been more urgent. This year's proceeds benefit Louie's Legacy Animal Rescue, a renowned organization dedicated to saving and rehoming pets. Mike Ruiz explains more from his home in NYC.

Tim Blenkenship:What message are you hoping to amplify through this year's calendar?
Mike Ruiz: I wish people would fully comprehend that for every dog that a breeder brings into the world, one dog dies in a shelter. If people stopped supporting indiscriminate breeding and saved a life in need instead, the endless suffering would end. I urge anyone considering buying a dog from a breeder or pet store to take a stroll through a shelter on euthanasia day.

TB: Why did you choose Louie's Legacy Animal Rescue as this year's beneficiary?
M.R: Louie's Legacy was the very first rescue that the calendar benefitted back in 2014. Having spread the love to other rescues over the years, I've come back to Louie's Legacy because of their integrity, their compassion and their transparency as a 501c3. Louie's Legacy has a Platinum rating (the highest rating) on Guidestar, a platform that rates charities based on financial transparency and a myriad of other criteria that demonstrate integrity.

T.B: What's the creative process behind pairing fitness icons with rescue animals for each shot?
***M.R*:** It really all boils down to who the dogs gravitate to. My main concern is always the welfare of the dogs. They have all been through so much stress and uncertainty, the last thing that I'd ever want to do is cause any additional stress on them.

T.B:How did you select Sergi Constance as the cover model?
M.R: Sergi is a legend in the fitness world and has millions of social media followers. Also, he happens to a wildly compassionate man. After our shoot, he insisted that we visit a local shelter to photograph dogs in need so that we could network them and get them adopted. He is exactly the type of person that I seek out to participate in this project.

T.B:In today's digital age, do people still buy calendars?
M.R: The calendar is always well received and this year is no exception. They are selling like hot cakes! The calendar is a heartwarming message wrapped in a

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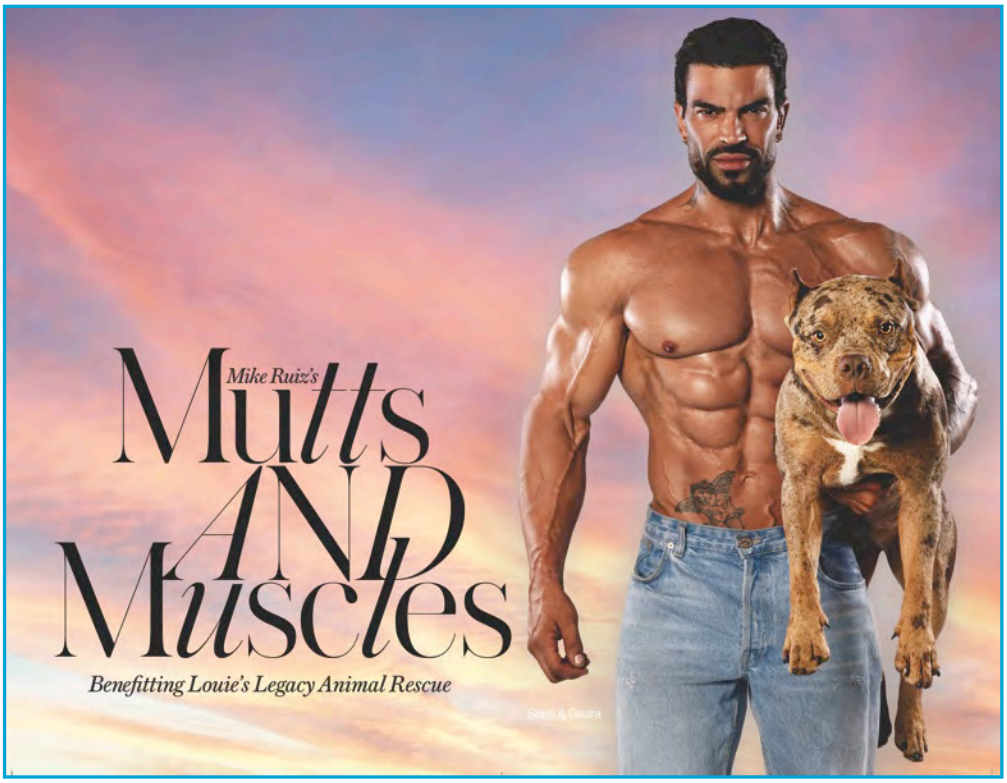
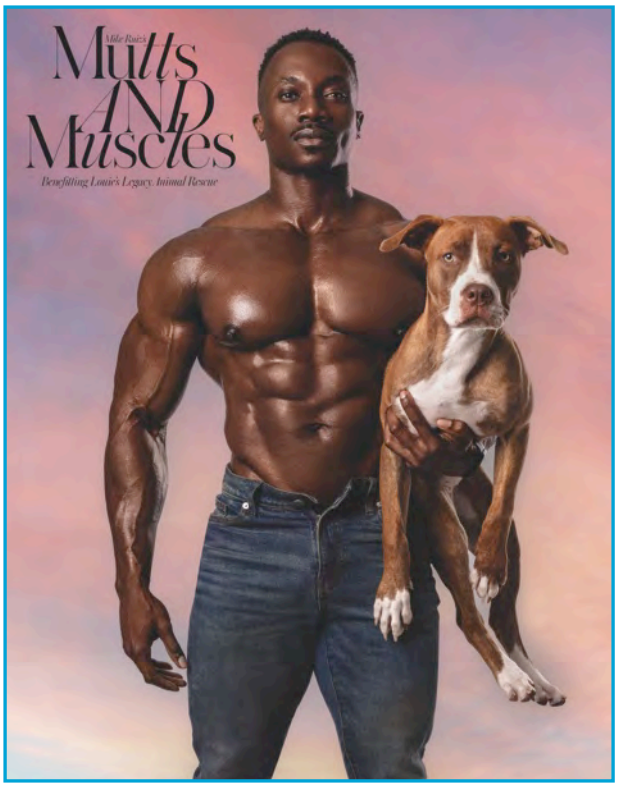
T.B: Mutts and Muscles is the perfect holiday gift!
M.R: Not only is the calendar an explosion of eye candy and an overload of cuteness but it actually saves lives. It's a wonderful way to give a gift that keeps on giving for 14 months and it will make you feel like you're making a difference. I can't think of a better gift to give to others… and to yourself!

Mike Ruiz's MUTTS AND MUSCLES 2025 is $29.99 at ***http://louieslegacy.org/calendar***





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Q-Music: Chicago Then and Now

By Gregg Shapiro

Verböten Photo by Jaycee Rockhold

Compared to other big cities, Chicago arrived late to the punk rock scene, but when it did, it was first embraced in gay bars such The Greenleaf (which later became Oz) and La Mere Vipere. It was in these venues that bands such as the **Effigies** and **Verböten** first got their starts.

Praised by the late, great musician and audio engineer Steve Albini, the Effigies return with "Burned" (BFD), the band's first new album in 17 years, and the final release featuring vocals by the late lead singer John Kezdy, who died in a 2023 bicycling accident during the recording of "Burned." The Effigies driving, scorched sound, which has more in common with LA punk than NY punk (say Black Flag as opposed to the Ramones), is in full force on the album. The mood and view is unsurprisingly political, particularly given the age of the band members and what they've lived through. This comes through loud and clear on the songs "Incident on Lost Nation Road," "Manifesto," "Everything's Coming Off," "Johnny and Dan," and "Cede The City."

In addition to playing shows at La Mere Vipere, Verböten has other connections to the LGBTQ community. Lead vocalist Tracey Bradford, who also happens to be the cousin of Dave Grohl (of Nirvana and Foo Fighters fame), is a queer woman. Guitarist and vocalist Jason Narducy, a longtime friend of the community, is known for recording and touring with queer music legend Bob Mould. Considering Narducy's collaboration with Mould, it's not surprising that some of the songs on Verböten's long-awaited self-titled debut album, on Inside Outside Records, have a sound reminiscent of Hüsker Dü. Of course, there's an art to sustaining this kind of musical blast, and the band members aren't as young as they were in the early 1980s, so they deserve kudos creating this record. Additionally, with age comes rage and wisdom, two things that the album has in abundance, as you can hear "Dark Things," "Bodily Autonomy," "Full Disruption," "No More Indecision," "Human Division," "Radiate," and "Conviction of Youth." This album could easily be the resistance soundtrack we need as Trump returns to power.

After the early days of the Effigies and Verböten, a lot occurred in the Chicago music scene, especially during the 1990s with the rise of huge acts such as Smashing Pumpkins, Liz Phair, Fall Out Boy, and Wilco, as well as the comeback of Mavis Staples.

Chicago continues to be fertile ground for new musical acts including **Dehd** and **Friko**. It's unclear if the members of Friko, led by Niko Kapetan and Bailey Minzenberg (who identifies as queer

and uses they/them pronouns), ever listened to the Effigies or were aware of Verböten before making their debut album "Where We've Been, Where We Go From Here" (ATO), but they travel a similar punk rocking path on songs such as "Chemical," "Crashing Through," and "Crimson to Chrome." In other places, Friko makes some of the most unexpectedly lovely sounds, especially on "For Ella," "Until I'm With You Again," and "Cardinal."

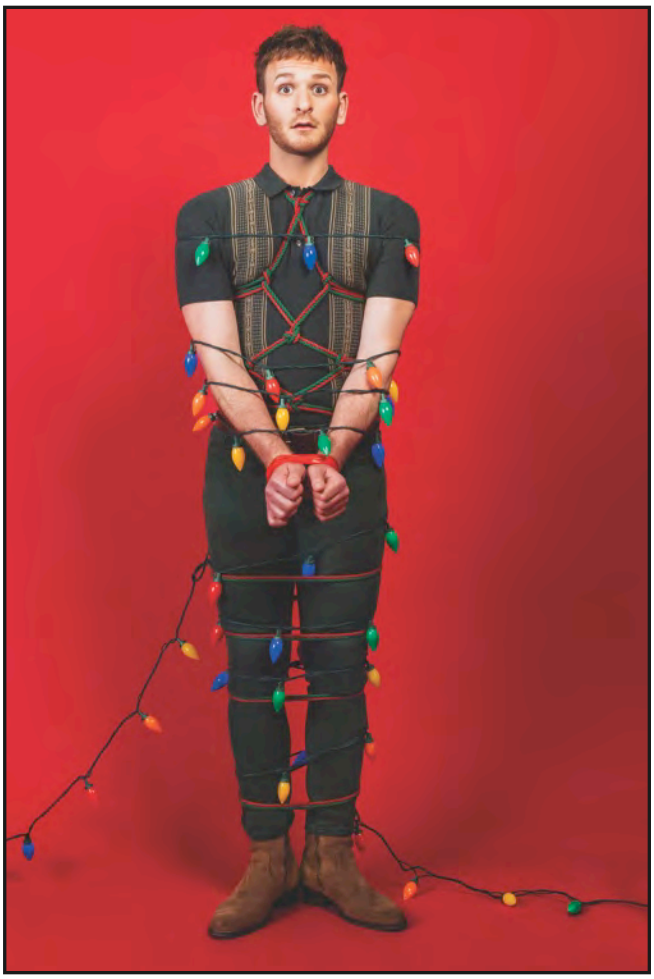
Dehd and Friko Photo By Pooneh-Ghana

If you didn't know better, the first time you hear the song "Dog Days," the opening track on "Poetry" by Dehd (Fat Possum), you might think you were listening to a new song by queer band The Drums. But you'd be wrong. Of the Chicago bands included here, Dehd could be described as the most sonically accessible. The song "Mood Ring" (with the music video starring a couple of drag queens) continues to be in regular rotation Sirius XMU. From the subtle country punk of "Hard To Love" to the other worldly "Alien" to the heights of "Don't Look Down" to the cutting edge of "Knife," Dehd gives listeners reasons to live, in spite of the current state of the world.

The Effigies performs at Metro on December 20. Visit ***metrochicago.com.***

Brian Falduto Releases Original Holiday Song, "Christmas Solo"

A Jingle for Singles Spending the Holidays Alone



Country music crooner Brian Falduto is bringing a fresh and uplifting perspective to holiday music this season with his first original jingle, "Christmas Solo." This playful, country-pop tune shines a spotlight on those who find themselves alone during the holidays, reframing solo time as an opportunity for self-love and celebration.

Inspired by his own single years, Falduto wrote "Christmas Solo" as a remedy to the seasonal blues that can come from the societal pressure to be partnered during the holidays. "I've spent many years single, and I've often felt out of place during the holiday season," Falduto explains. "The messaging around Christmas is so focused on being together with loved ones. But for many of us, especially those who are single by choice, it can feel isolating. I wanted to create a song that celebrates the beauty of being 'self-partnered' for the holidays and acknowledges that spending Christmas solo can be something joyful."

In "Christmas Solo," Falduto invites listeners to view the season through a lens of positivity, whether they're solo by choice or circumstance. Rather than the typical holiday fare focused on romantic love and longing, Falduto's song celebrates the freedom that comes with being single. "Why is there no holiday anthem for single people?" he asks. "Valentine's Day and weddings celebrate love and relationships, but singles deserve an anthem, too. I wanted to give singles a chance to embrace the holiday spirit without feeling like something's missing."

Produced by Brett Castro, "Christmas Solo" blends Falduto's signature country-pop style with a dose of festive cheer. The track's lively production includes a standout saxophone solo by Nate Hopkins and background vocals by Bronwyn Whittle and Kelsey Martin, giving it a joyous, celebratory vibe reminiscent of holiday pop hits by artists like Mariah Carey and Kelly Clarkson. "It's catchy and fun, which was the goal," Falduto says. "I wanted it to have that shiny, holiday feel but without the undertone of sadness or bitterness. This is a song for celebrating your own company."

Falduto also shares the advantages of a solo Christmas, emphasizing the perks of having a low-key holiday. "You don't have to dress up, make small talk, cook, or clean up after guests," he laughs. "Spending Christmas solo gives you a rare chance to truly relax, decompress, and reflect on the season's true meaning, away from all the holiday hustle and bustle."

Beyond his music, Falduto connects deeply with the themes in "Christmas Solo" due to his own experiences navigating the holidays as a queer individual. Reflecting on past seasons, he shares that, while he may not have always beenphysically alone, he often felt emotionally isolated. "The holidays can be a complicated time for the queer community, especially when returning to environments that don't feel fully supportive. 'Christmas Solo' is for everyone who feels out of place this time of year, whether you're physically alone or just feeling like you don't belong."

Brian Falduto first gained fame playing the role of Fancy Pants in the Jack Black cult classic film School of Rock. In 2023, he released his first country music song, "Same Old Country Love

Song." It was greeted with a flood of positive encouragement and excitement and would become an LGBTQ+ country music anthem. "The success of 'Same Old Country Love Song' was extremely validating and encouraging," he recalls. "It served as a testament to how many people have felt left out by country music and how much a song like this was clearly needed." Subsequent releases followed including "Hottest Guy Here" and "Big Boys Club, and Brian Falduto's first full-length album, Gay Country (Deluxe Edition).

Holiday music fans will find both cheer and comfort in "Christmas Solo," especially those who feel left out by traditional Christmas songs. "I love holiday music," Falduto says. "But so much of it focuses on romantic love or family togetherness. 'Christmas Solo' fills a gap for people who don't fit that mold, who might need a little reminder that it's okay to celebrate the season alone."

Falduto's holiday wish for his fans: "There's so much going on in the world right now. I hope this song brings a little bit of joy to people. Joy can be a powerful remedy and a form of resistance when things are tough. Let's use it to lift each other up this season."

Brian Falduto's "Christmas Solo"is currently available on all streaming platforms. Visit ***http://BrianFalduto.com.*** *Follow on FB, IG, X and TikTok @BrianFalduto*

GRAB JORDAN

Queer as a Bell

Jordan Bell Stars in the Second Season of the hilarious Queer Series, Danny Will Die Alone

By Tom Tietjen

The hit Dekkoo series, Danny Will Die Alone, is back with its highly anticipated second season. Building on the success of the first, the new season takes viewers on another laugh-out-loud journey, diving deeper into the complexities of gay modern dating with his signature blend of outrageous comedy and emotional depth.

In the first season, Danny, played by Jack Tracy, was portrayed as more of an angry archetype. This season, he is a more realized and fleshed-out person, thanks in large part to the addition of actor Jordan Bell who plays Matty, Danny's regular hookup buddy and foil. Matty serves as Danny's go-to for intimacy between his dating misadventures, and the chemistry between Bell and Tracy is undeniable. Jordan Bell explains more from his home in NYC.

Tom Tietjen:How does Danny Will Die Alone reflect modern dating within the LGBTQ+ community?
Jordan Bell: I think the show captures the real highs and lows of modern dating. It's not always a fairytale or a happy ending—though, let's be honest, there's usually some kind of happy ending, if you know what I mean. There's frustration and uncertainty because people are often looking out for themselves and not always on the same page. And I love that the show doesn't shy away from exploring sex kinks or things you don't always see in mainstream media. It embraces the chaos of queer dating today, but with plenty of laughs and heart.

T.T: What drew you to the role of Matty?
J.B: I was drawn to Matty because, on the surface, he's sharp and aggressively funny, but underneath that exterior, there's so much vulnerability and openness. He's incredibly layered. The series really captures the reality of modern dating: juggling multiple connections at once, whether they're friends with benefits, purely physical, or something that blurs the lines. Matty's tough exterior is his way of keeping himself safe and sane in all that chaos. I found him really compelling and loved the challenge of exploring both his humor and his heartache.

T.T: What was it like working alongside Jack Tracy? Your on-screen chemistry is undeniable.
J.B: Working with Jack is such a gift. Being both the writer and star, he brings so much understanding to every moment. We spent a ton of time together on set, and he's an incredibly generous scene partner, always up for exploring and pushing boundaries in ways that felt natural and safe. The connection we built offscreen definitely shows up in our on-screen chemistry. It's something special.

T.T: Season Two balances outrageous comedy with deeper emotional moments, exploring some complex themes like polyamory and gender norms.
J.B: I think one of the best things about Danny Will Die Alone is how it tackles these complex themes while balancing comedy and real emotional depth. It's important to show the diversity of relationships and identities we see today. There's no one-size-fits-all when it comes to

love or identity. Every person and relationship are unique, and as long as there's mutual respect, there's room for all kinds of connections and dynamics.

photo by Joseph Patrick Conroy

T.T: What do you think Matty adds to Danny's journey, how does their dynamic shape the season?
J.B: Matty is the total opposite of Danny. While Danny's more biting, Matty is short, abrupt, and straight to the point. But that contrast is what makes their dynamic so fiery and fun. Matty brings a fresh perspective that balances out Danny's cynicism, and together, they help each other navigate the wild world of gay dating in New York. It's that push-and-pull between them that really drives the season.

T.T: The two share some pretty steamy scenes!
J.B: Oh, definitely! My very first day on set, I had to strip down to nothing while Jack delivered a monologue directly into my crotch. Talk about diving right in! By the end of filming, we spent so much time together in various stages of undress that it just felt normal. Those intimate scenes brought Jack and me closer, and that connection really helped ignite our on-screen chemistry. It was wild but so much fun!

T.T: Do you see Matty and Danny turning into something more than a casual hook-up?
J.B: There's obviously some great chemistry between them, and keeping it casual is part of the fun. But as they spend more time together, who knows? Things might shift, and they might even grow a little deeper. It'll be interesting to see how it all plays out.

T.T: With season three already in the works, what are you most excited to explore next in Matty's journey?
J.B: I'm really excited about what's next for Matty! I'm curious to see how his relationship with Danny evolves—whether they dive into even more outrageous sexual escapades or if it turns into something deeper. We've only gotten a glimpse of Matty's world so far, but I'm ready to dive in and meet more of the characters in his life. And with all the hints about his adventurous sex life, I'd love to see what kind of trouble Matty gets into on the weekends. It's going to be a wild ride, and I'm here for it!

photo by Joseph Patrick Conroy

New episodes of Danny Will Die Alone season 2 are streaming weekly on Dekkoo.com. Follow the series on Instagram @dannywilldiealone.

CHRISTMAS EVE
PARTY WITH
SANTA
TREATS, GIFTS & PHOTOS
WITH THE BIG GUY!
TUESDAY 12.24
48TH ANNUAL
black & blue
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CHICAGO'S LEATH
TUESDAY 12.31
COMPLIMENTARY
BUFFET 9PM
GAMES & PRIZES,
PARTY FAVORS,
CHAMPAGNE TOAST &
BLACKOUT AT MIDNIGHT
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DJ HARRY T
$15 TICKETS AVAILABLE
AT THE BAR

2025

TOUCHÉ
HUNGOVER & HORNY
ALL DAY BEER BUST
$2 DRAUGHTS & SODAS ALL DAY

OPEN 7AM
PAJAMA & LONG JOHN'S PARTY
$6 BLOODY MARYS
& MIMOSAS
LITE BREAKFAST BITES
SCREENING THE ROSE BOWL PARADE 10AM

@NOON
BOWL GAMES & CHILI PARTY
PEACH BOWL AT NOON
ROSE BOWL AT 4PM
SUGAR BOWL AT 6:45PM

@7PM
NEW YEAR'S DAY MOVIE NIGHT
IN CLUB ROOM

10PM TIL 4AM
JOCKSTRAP NIGHT
FREE PANTS CHECK
DRAWINGS FOR CHAIN JOCKS FROM LEATHRER64TEN

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BAR SINCE 1977
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2025 MR CHICAGO LEATHER
CONTEST WEEKEND
JANUARY 24–26

GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials;

MONDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor), Everyday Specials: $5Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts***.@mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. ***Cell Block:*** Open 4pm-2am. ***Charlies:*** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025***. Hydrate:*** Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm.. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $5 Well Drinks.***Shakers on Clark:*** Comedy Night $1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. ***Steamworks:*** Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons. Everyday Specials: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 5pm-4am. Horny Bastards A Night for those who just didn't get enough over the weekend.ClubRoom Opens at 6pm, 6-9pm $3 Well Drinks $1 Off call-imports, $3 PBR/Rolling Rock. Club Room Open!

TUESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . $3 House Shots, $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: $5Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts***.@mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. ***Cell Block:*** Open 4pm-2am. ***Charlie's:*** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025 ***Hydrate:*** TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis ***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $3 House Shots, $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts. Happy Hour Specials 5pm–8pm: $5 Stoli Mules (all flavors). Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. ***Shakers on Clark:*** $3 Domestic Beers. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. ***Steamworks:*** Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 Amsterdam Cocktails, $5 Tallboys Everyday Specials:, $5Jager, $5 Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 5pm - 4am***.***Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi. 6-9pm $3 Well Drinks $1 Off call-imports, $3 PBR/Rolling Rock. 12/24 Christmas Eve Party with Santa 10pm 12/31 48th Annual Black & Blue New Year's Eve Party.

WEDNESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $ New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Tallboy Beers Specials: Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. ***Cell Block:*** Open 4pm-2am. ***Charlie's:*** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. ***Jackhammer:*** $5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons, Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis ***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $4Miller Lite Drafts, $5 Stolis (All Flavors). Happy Hour Specials 7pm–10pm: $6 Any BIG drafts Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am $5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. ***Shakers on Clark***: Karaoke Night $1 Off Long Islands. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Dua & Ariana last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. ***Steamworks:*** Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $3 House Shots, $5 Tito's Cocktails, $7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) FreeDarts ***Touche:*** Open 5pm - 4am. Jockstrap Night Free Clothing Check. 6-9pm $3 Well Drinks $1 Off call-imports, $3 PBR/Rolling Rock. 12/25 Christmas Day First Day of Hanukkah Open at 8pm Club Room Open. 111/25 Open at 7am Hungover & Horny Beer Bust $2 Drafts All Day ClubRoom Open 6pm.

THURSDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons . Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts***. @mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. ***Charlie's:*** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. ***Jackhammer:*** $3 House Shots $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Miller Lit Tallboys Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis..***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $6 Tito Cocktails, Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. ***Shakers on Clark:*** $1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks,Karaoke 10pm-1am. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursday! Pop Music Videos in Glass/Side Bars 9pm-2am, Pink Pony Club 1st Thur of month in Main Bar, All Things K-Pop other Thursdays in Main Bar. ***Steamworks:*** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails$5 Tallboy Beers Everyday Specials: , $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 5pm - 4am.Jockstrap Night Free Clothing Check.

Daily Specials;

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts$3 House Shots. Happy Hour Specials: 3pm–6pm: $4 New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's**: Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **Jackhammer:** $5 Miller Lite Tallboys $8 New Amsterdam & Redbull Happy Hour Specials 5–9pm: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons $5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm $8.95 Martinis. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. **The Sofo Tap:** $3 House Shots, $7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 3pm–6pm: $4 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tall Boys Beers (Buch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Darts. **Touche:** 12/27 Latin Leather Night Feliz Navidad. 1/3/25 Nipple Play Party. 1/10/25 Friday Funder caring for our community.1/17/25 Cowboy Round Up with ILGRA.

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $6 Lagunitas IPADrafts. Happy Hour Specials: ½ Off All Drafts $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. ***@mosphere:*** $5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. ***Baton Show Lounge:*** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. ***Cell Block:*** Open 2pm-3am. ***Charlie's:*** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. ***Jackhammer:*** $3 House Shots $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails $5 Miller Lite Tallboys Happy Hour Specials 5–9pm: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons$5 Chicago HandshakeEveryday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. Jackhammer: $3 House Shots $5 Miller Lite TallBoys Happy Hour Specials: $5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons. Everyday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open with dancers at 3pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $5 Signature Margaritas Happy Hour Specials.2pm–5pm: $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails $12 Mimosa Carafes, Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 1pm, Post-Brunch SaturGay Fun 1pm-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. ***The Sofo Tap:*** $5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat, $5 Signature Margaritas, Happy Hour Specials: 12pm–3pm: ½ Off All Drafts Everyday Specials: $5Jager, Fireball & Malort, $4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. ***Touche:*** Open 2pm - 5am. 12/28 RIPE Party Dim Lights Deep Beats Go-Go Dudes DJ Harry T. 1/4/25 Chicago's BEAR Night 1/11/25 Dungeon Master Night S&M Demo @ mignight CWB 5pm.

SUNDAY FUNDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: $5 Signature Margaritas, $6 Chicago Handshakes Happy Hour Specials 2pm–5pm $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails Everyday Specials:$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort $4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. ***@mosphere:*** $6 Jack Products, $4 Domestic Draft, House Shots $2. ***Baton Show Lounge:*** Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. ***Cell Block:*** Open 2pm-2am ***Charlie's:*** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025 ***Hydrate:*** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. ***Jackhammer:*** $5 New Amsterdam CoctKails $7 Jackhammered Long Islands Happy Hour Specials :1st Sunday: $7 Planter's Punch2nd Sunday: $5 Dog Bowls (Premium Well) 3rd Sunday: $3 Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's Tallboy Beers4th Sunday: $5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor)5th Sunday: $6 New Amsterdam & Red BullEveryday Specials: $5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, $4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. ***Kit Kat Lounge:*** Divalicious brunch 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm $8.95 Martinis ***.Lucky Horseshoe:*** Open with dancers at 3pm. $5 drink specials. ***Meeting House Tavern:*** $3 House Shots, $12 Mimosa Carafes. Happy Hour Specials: 7pm–10pm: $5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials $5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. ***North End:*** Open at 11am, $3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm ***Shakers on Clark***: $1 off Bloody Mary's, $1 off Mules: Vodka, Tequila, or Whiskey. And $1 off all Revolution beers. ***Sidetrack:*** Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am . ***Touche:*** Open 2pm - 4am**.** Beer Bust $2 Bud Light Drafts, $2 Sodas, Clubroom Opens 6pm, Movie Night 7pm..

GRAB Magazine would like to wish everyone a safe and happy Holiday.

Please don't Drink and Drive

GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of December

Visit nexusradio.fm

	Artist	Title
1	Jorden Dux & Alphadogs	As Long As I Got You (Radio Edit)
2	Mr. Belt & Wezol x Qobra	Keep It Exciting (Radio Edit)
3	Lucas & Steve	Heart First ft. Jordan Shaw
4	Kris Van Nuffel Ft. Jordan Grace	Elly (Radio Edit)
5	Manyfew	Hold On Ft. Hedara
6	Maur Vs Dave Spoon	At Night
7	Two Friends & Alexander Stewart	Wrong Way
8	The Blessed Madonna & Kylie Minogue	Edge Of Saturday Night
9	Timmy Trumpet	Imagine Ft. Carbonne (Timmy Trumpet Remix)
10	Nimino	I Only Smoke When I Drink
11	Love Harder	Nightlife
12	R3hab x Sophie And The Giants	All Night
13	Armin Van Buuren	Part Of Me Ft. Louis Iii
14	Menshee	You & I
15	Farius	Is This Love
16	Martin Jensen X Sommer Ray	No Sleep (Radio Edit)
17	Clean Bandit x Anne Marie x David Guetta	Cry Baby
18	Morgin Madison & Adam Nazar & Crimsen	Closer (Ryan Lucian Remix)
19	Salute X Jessie Ware	Heaven In Your Arms (Radio Edit)
20	Audien	Living In Color ft. Jeoff Harris
21	Gattüso	By My Side
22	Kylie Minogue	Lights Camera Action
23	Alex Mills	Sensation
24	David Guetta & Alesso	Never Going Home Tonight Ft. Madison Love
25	Sonny Fodera x Jazzy & D.O.D	Somedays
26	Two Friends & Hrvy	All For Me Ft. Hrvy
27	Meduza	Another World ft. Hayla
28	Moguai x Enisa x Jean Noel	Willow Tree (Radio Edit)
29	Drove x Dillion Francis	Waterfall
30	Jes	What Will Be

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 31

2025 HOUSE PARTY

NEW YEAR'S EVE

NO DATE REQUIRED!!!

Lark

FEATURING:
FUN, GAMES
PRIZES & MORE!!!
DOORS OPEN AT 8:30PM

INCLUDES:
3 HOUR OPEN BAR
PARTY APPETIZERS
DESSERT BAR
MOËT & CHANDON
CHAMPAGNE TOAST
AT MIDNIGHT

HOSTED BY:
DRAG STARS
VIVIAN DEJOUR
+ FRIENDS

FOLLOWED BY NYE KARAOKE PARTY
SING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH
PHAB PHIL
MIDNIGHT-3AM

MOËT & CHANDON
CHAMPAGNE

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WEDNESDAY JANUARY 1

STARRING
AMERICA
POWERS

Lark

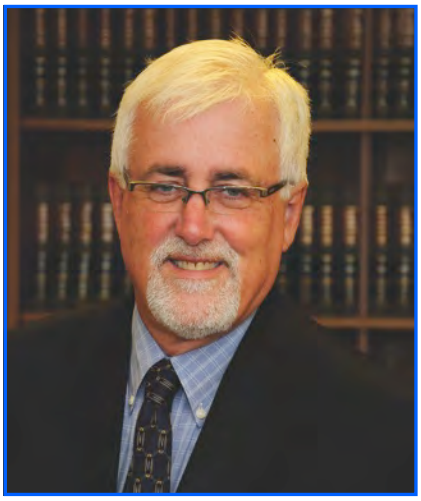
PAJAMA PARTY

NEW YEAR'S DAY DRAG BRUNCH

HANGOVER BRUNCH 11AM-3PM
FEATURING 5 BOTTOMLESS
DRINK CHOICES
INCLUDING NUTRL CANNED COCKTAILS
$5 BUD LIGHT

RESERVATIONS
SCAN FOR

GRAB ROGER



Divorced – New Resolutions for the Future

By Roger V. McCaffre-Boss, Esq.

One of the benefits of marriage is the ability to obtain a divorce. To have a judicial resolution of financial and child custody issues if the couple can't agree. Divorce attorneys have seen a wave of divorces due to the changes in the tax laws and couples who realized that true and everlasting love was not in their future as a couple.

If your divorce was finalized in the recent past, now is the time to revise your estate plan. Here are the issues you should discuss with your lawyer:

Make sure your estate planning attorney has a copy of your Divorce Agreement. Your attorney will need to know what obligations you have to your ex-spouse in the event of your death.

Update your Power of Attorney. Under §2-6(b) of the *Illinois Power of Attorney Act*, 755 ILCS 45/1-1, et seq., a former spouse named as an agent under a power of attorney is deemed to have died on the date of the judgment for dissolution of marriage or legal separation.

Unless your former spouse signed a new power of attorney after your divorce naming you as agent, you cannot use the POA signed before the divorce. If there is a successor agent named, that successor agent can use the POA, but you cannot. You should execute a new power of attorney naming a friend, relative or trusted advisor to act as your agent regarding your finances and assets.

Update your Health Care Power. The health care power allows you to name someone to make health care decisions for you if, for instance, you were in a car accident or had a health emergency and were unable to communicate. You may want to name an adult child, a friend, or another relative.

Update your Will and Trust. Remove the provisions for your ex-spouse, and remove your ex-spouse as the executor and trustee. You want to make sure your "Ex" does not receive any assets if you die and has no control over your estate or trust.

If you have minor children, you want to review who you have named as guardian in the Will. You may choose to name your ex-spouse as the guardian, or you may name someone else. Be aware that your ex-spouse will most likely serve as guardian of your minor children if you pass away unless he or she is determined by the court to be unfit.

Make sure you have a trust for minor children. If you do not have a trust for minor children, and your ex-spouse is the children's guardian, he or she will have control of the children's finances until they turn 18. Most clients do not want their ex-spouse controlling their children's monies.

Pay particular attention to life insurance requirements. I have encountered numerous instances where folks just completely ignored their obligations to maintain life insurance under their divorce agreement, or named their new spouse as beneficiary of the policy instead. This could result in litigation. Review your obligation to maintain life insurance under the divorce agreement with your estate planning attorney, and with your divorce attorney, if necessary.

Check your beneficiary designations. Make sure your 401K and IRA beneficiary designations are consistent with the terms of your divorce agreement. I have encountered a few situations where folks never updated their beneficiary designations after their divorce, and then died. This can result in unforeseen consequences and litigation to correct who the beneficiary should have been.

Time for a Prenuptial Agreement. I am always surprised how soon folks get remarried after their divorce is finalized. Needless to say, if you are thinking about getting remarried, make sure you have a prenuptial agreement in place beforehand.

Now is the time to tie up those loose ends from your divorce and get your estate plan in order.

Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a gradute of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at ***RVMLawyer@aol.com****. He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.*

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GRAB HOLLY

Opening Presents

By Holly Maholm

It was late morning, a few days before Christmas, when I arrived at Donut Time for my morning coffee and treat. I walked up to Aly, who was working the register, and who knew my "usual" well enough to have coffee and two peach fritters waiting for me. I collected these treasures, then looked over in the corner and saw Cindy, Xandra, Tuco and Grandma Lily sharing a booth. I joined them and was instantly accosted by Cindy.

"Okay, Holly, you're a Boomer, so this should be easy for you. We're having a contest to see who got the best presents when we were young. But since you're a Boomer, probably the best present you ever got was a doll made out of corn cobs and silkweed pods…" Everyone laughed, and I responded, "Yes, it was a long time ago when I was a child and got nice presents, but honestly, I did not grow up on a farm in the wilderness."

Xandra, seeing my discomfort, and taking pity on me, explained, "We are going around the table and sharing 'What was the best present I ever got,' and then 'What was the worst…,' and after that, 'What present did you give that was the most loved by the recipient,' and finally, 'What present did you give that was the biggest dud.' You've given and received a great many presents in your lifetime, Holly, so you should have a lot to share."

I took a sip of coffee and – glancing over at Grandma Lily - replied, "Well, since I am representing Boomers everywhere – though at my age my Booms are mostly inaudible – I will share what my best memories are. You see, at my age, it's not the presents I remember (Grandma Lily smiled in agreement), it's those moments when the people I loved opened their presents. Now, you know I have three grown daughters, and I will never forget how each girl revealed her own unique personality by how she opened her presents. Let me tell you, now."

"Amelia would open each present carefully, so as not to damage it with too much energetic gripping, ripping and stripping. First studying the package exterior (until, by some unfailing psychic connection, she thought she knew what it was), she would consult her feelings to decide how she felt about it. Next, she would actually open the package, but would do so silently, as if fearing to allow some improvident remark to escape her lips before she was absolutely ready to pronounce sentence. When the foregoing preparatory formalities had been accomplished (and never before!), she would turn to the giver (either 'Santa' or 'Mom and Dad') and express her well-modulated gratitude.

"As for Brittany, her style was different. She would take hold of the present, and (assuming it was not too large or heavy) would hold it up in the air in front of her and turn it over and around. Then, if she were so moved, she would shake it vigorously (as if, if she could only shake it hard enough, it would call out and confess its contents, rather than suffer any more violence). Or, alternatively, from time to time Brittany would engage the giver in an impromptu game of 'Twenty Questions' in which she would attempt to guess the likely contents, repeatedly asking the giver 'Did I get it right yet?'

"Only after several members of the family had had enough of this unnecessary and self-indulgent delay, and voices had been raised in injured exasperation, did Brittany bestir herself to actually open the present. (She did this every time; and did not endear herself to her anxious, impatient sisters. Her mother and I, however, thought this was the funniest thing – that someone so young could already feel the need to make the moment last.)

"Third, there was Catherine, who was, to me, an enigma. There were times when she would grasp the present and rip off the wrapping paper as if some family of pet gerbils were trapped inside and running out of air. Other times – it seemed when she could guess the contents, and the gift was the answer to some childish, wishful prayer she had whispered – she would, without warning, stop altogether. She might suddenly decide she was thirsty and needed juice, or hungry and needed a roll with butter, or (once) that she had forgotten to feed her fish, and all charitable benevolences had to be suspended until those finny dependents had been provided for.

"So we could never be sure how much time Catherine would need to open any given present (and aren't they all), but in time she relented, and seeing the gift revealed, bestowed upon the giver her purest, sweetest smile, and usually said, 'It's just what I wanted.'"

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly's book Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly's adventures involving both magical unicorns and her LGBTQ friends. Send a message to Holly at ***www.hollymaholm.com.***

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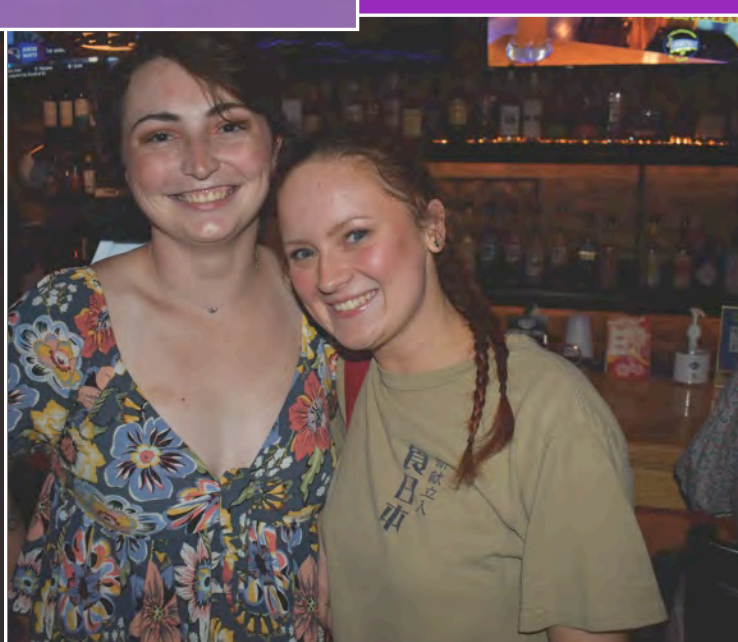

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THE ANNOYANCE THEATER PREMIERES NEW QUEER HOLIDAY SHOW A VERY STEAMWORKS CHRISTMAS NOW THROUGH DECEMBER 28

After years of success with Steamworks the Musical, the Annoyance Theatre debuted the holiday spin-off A Very Steamworks Christmas. Written by Ryan Brown, Nathan Wetter, Noah Bruckshen, and Connor James, the show is a queer retelling of Charles Dicken's A Christmas Carol. The show is directed by Connor James and produced by The Annoyance in partnership with Steamworks Baths.

The show follows a group of Steamworks patrons and employees as they try to save Steamworks from being destroyed by an evil businesswoman. Stephen Stephan, Steamworks royalty, can save Steamworks but hates Christmas, leaving the rest of the cast to find a way to save the building. Stephen is visited by the ghosts of Steamworks past, present, and future to show him what Steamworks and Christmas are really about.

Annoyance's Steamworks the Musical originally hit the stage over a decade ago and has evolved and grown ever since. Hot off of an extremely successful run in the summers of 2023 and 2024, the cast concocted the plan to write and produce a holiday show. In just three months, the show was put on its feet.

"Combining my two favorite things, being gay and Christmas, has been such an honor," said ***Connor James***, director and co-writer of A Very Steamworks Christmas. "We have a new holiday classic on our hands, thanks to the tireless work of our cast, writers, music director, technical director, and production staff at The Annoyance."

A Very Steamworks Christmas runs Saturdays at 10 pm from November 30 through December 28 at The Annoyance Theater (851 W. Belmont Ave). Tickets can be purchased online at **http://www.*theannoyance.com***

MUSIC THEATER WORKS ANNOUNCES THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR LEGALLY BLONDE: THE MUSICAL, DECEMBER 19 - 29

Music Theater Works has announced the cast and creative team for the final production of its 2024 season, Legally Blonde: The Musical, in the Center Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie, December 19 - 29.

Legally Blonde: The Musical, with music and lyrics by ***Laurence O'Keefe*** and ***Nell Benjamin*** and book by ***Heather Hach***, is directed by ***Mandy Modic,*** choreographed by ***Mollyanne Nunn*** and music directed by ***Linda Madonia***.

This much fun should be illegal! Legally Blonde: The Musical, based on the cult classic film, shares the story of Elle Woods and her faithful pup, Bruiser on their journey from Southern California roots to the hallowed halls of Harvard Law School. Join Elle as she learns life's important lessons on the subjects of love, friendship, the law and self-respect.

Tickets are now on sale at ***MusicTheaterWorks.com*** or by calling the Music Theater Works box office at the North Shore Center, ***847.673.6300.***

PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE ANNOUNCES THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR THE TONY AWARD-WINNING FUN HOME, JANUARY 16 - MARCH 2, 2025, AT THE RUTH PAGE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Porchlight Music Theatre announces the cast and creative team for the Tony-award winning and Pulitzer Prize-nominated musical Fun Home, January 16 - March 2, 2025, at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St. Fun Home, with music by ***Jeanine Tesori*** and book and lyrics by ***Lisa Kron***, is based on the graphic novel by ***Alison Bechdel*** and is directed for Porchlight Music Theatre by ***Stephen Schellhardt*** with music direction by ***Heidi Joosten.***

Winner of seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical, and a Pulitzer finalist, Fun Home is a refreshingly honest, emotional and revolutionary musical. Based on Alison Bechdel's critically acclaimed graphic novel, Fun Home shares how Bechdel unlocks memories, milestones and mysteries of her youth as she begins to write her first graphic novel. With a compassionate score and a brilliant script, Fun Home tells the story of seeing your parents through grown-up eyes.

Tickets are on sale now at **thttp://www.PorchlightMusicTheatre.org.**

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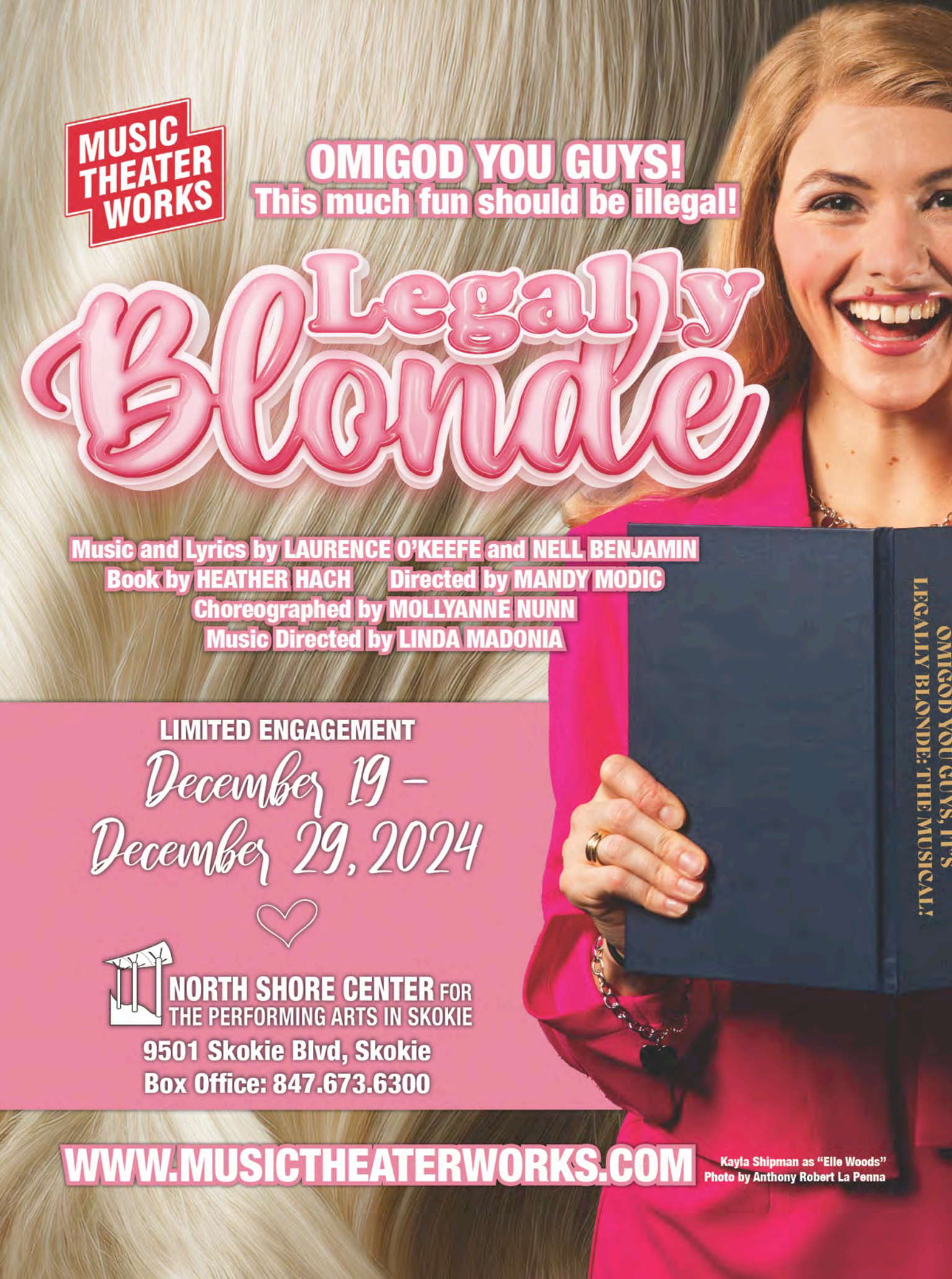
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